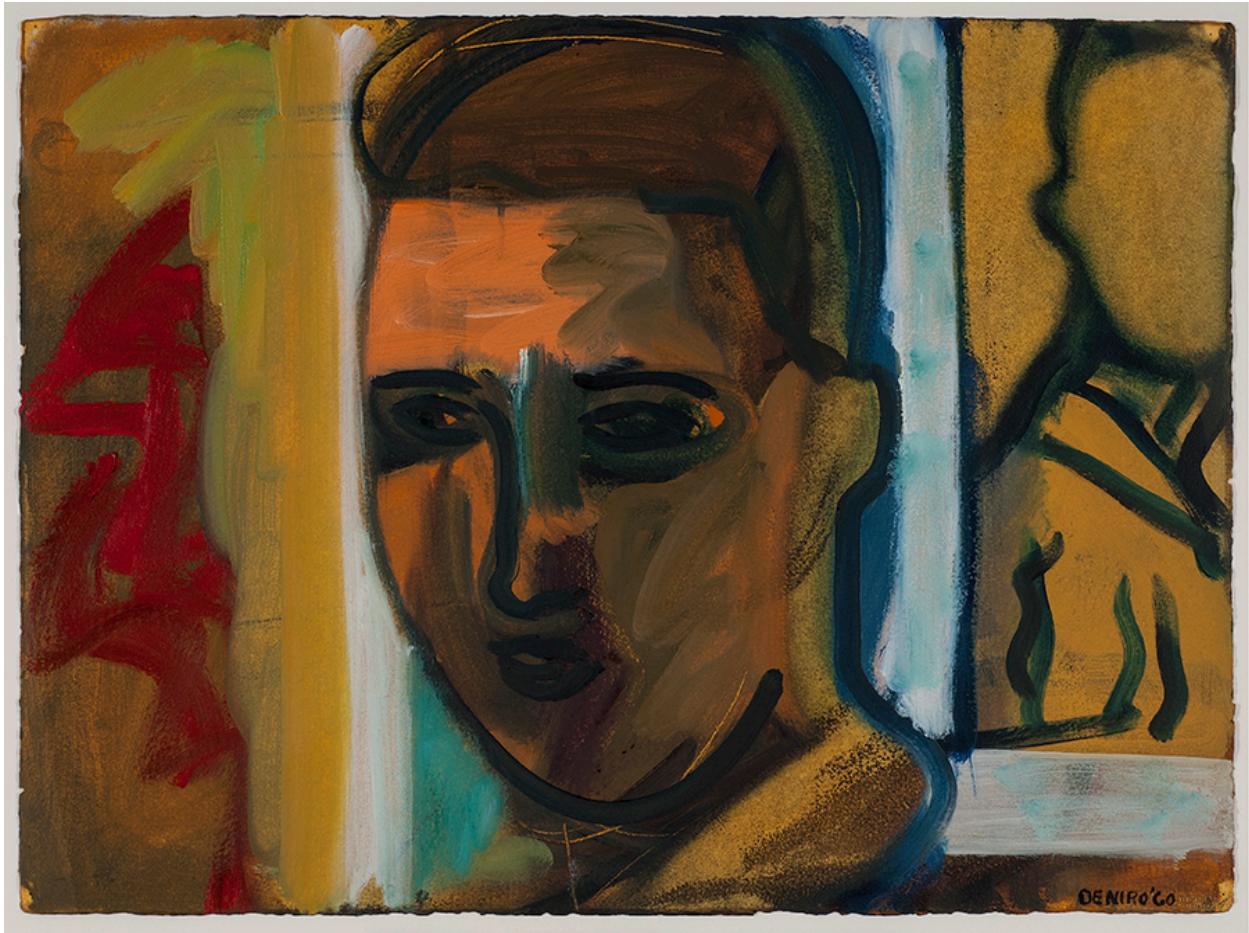


# WIDEWALLS

## Intensity in Paint - Robert De Niro, Sr. On Display at DC Moore Gallery



November 14, 2019

Balasz Takac

A prominent American school, **the Black Mountain College** was an unprecedented institution for many reasons. It was an avant-garde melting pot where professors encouraged students to expand their horizons by engaging themselves in experimentation. Several generations of artists were nurtured there, becoming rather influential figures. One of them was prolific painter **Robert De Niro, Sr.**, (1922 – 1993), father of the famous Hollywood actor. For more than four decades, this artist had been practicing **unpretentious painterly style** based on his fascination with the European modernism as well as Abstract Expressionism. De Niro's fluid and multilayered paintings reflect a craftsmanship, and a strong sense of devotion to this traditional media, especially when it comes to **landscape**.

Opening at **DC Moore Gallery** is a special survey of his long-standing oeuvre under the title *Robert De Niro, Sr.: Intensity in Paint, Installation of Six Works*.



Robert De Niro – Landscape with Trees and Lighthouse, 1968. Oil on canvas, 22 1/4 x 27 inches  
The Artistic Development of Robert De Niro, Sr.

Born in 1922 in New York into an Irish-Italian family, Robert De Niro, Sr. already **started taking art classes in his early teens**. The first crucial formative impulse happened in 1939, after he visited an arts school run by the celebrated master **Hans Hofmann**; he was then introduced to French modernists Matisse, Rousseau, and Rouault. It was Hofmann who suggested that De Niro continues his studies at the Black Mountain College. There he **studied under the renowned Bauhaus professor Josef Albers**.

In 1942, De Niro, Sr. learned about the Abstract Expressionist movement, returned to Hans Hofmann's school and was **financially supported by Hilla Rebay**, Director of Solomon Guggenheim's Museum of Non-Objective Painting. Four years later, the painter had his first **solo exhibition at Peggy Guggenheim's Art of This Century gallery**.



Robert De Niro – Interior with Still Life and Chairs, 1969. Oil on masonite, 21 3/4 x 30 inches

## The Works

Throughout the 1950s, Robert De Niro, Sr. had **a series of solo and group exhibitions**, and won the Longview Foundation award. His painterly style developed according to the dominating tendencies of Abstract Expressionism. The artist used the wet-on-wet method – for three days he would work on a canvas before the oil paint dried. A good example of these abstracted works from this period is *Landscape with Road*.

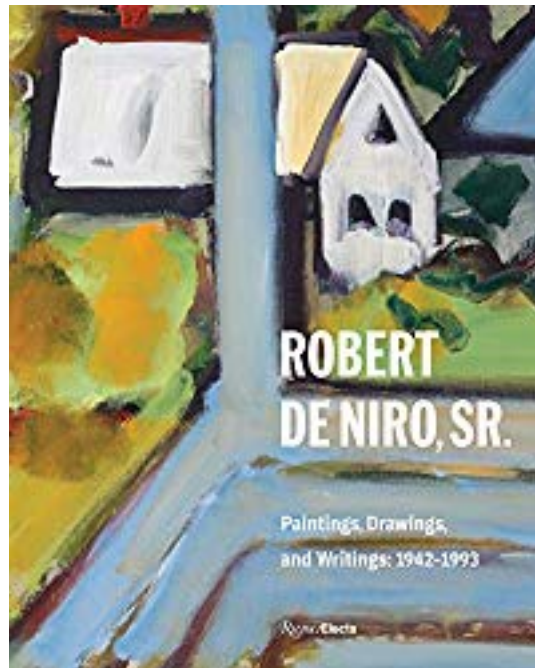
On the other hand, in the early 1960s, De Niro produced **a series of self-portraits**, such as the exhibited *Self Portrait* featuring himself in an abstracted setting suggesting his inner unrest. This painting also reveals a perception of the very act of painting – the act of self-help, salvation, and recuperation.



Robert De Niro – Landscape with Road, n.d. Oil on canvas, 27 1/4 x 34 1/4 inches

## Robert De Niro, Sr. at DC Moore Gallery

De Niro was **associated with the second generation of Abstract Expressionists**, and even formed close relationships with these artists, but he never became truly a part of their milieu. Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, the painter **continued to explore and develop his distinctive post-Fauve painterly style** by continually exhibiting in museums and galleries, and teaching at several art schools and colleges. In 1993, he passed away from cancer at his New York home. *Robert De Niro, Sr.: Intensity in Paint, Installation of Six Works* will be on view at DC Moore Gallery in New York **from November 14 until 21 December 2019**. The opening reception will be held on November 14, 6-8 pm.



**Editors' Tip:** *Robert De Niro, Sr.: Paintings, Drawings, and Writings: 1942-1993*

The first comprehensive monograph on painter and poet Robert De Niro, Sr. (1922-1993), a major contributor to postwar American art, known for his unique, bold style of painterly representation. De Niro was a visionary artist in the early days of Abstract Expressionism and a celebrated member of the New York School of painters, along with Mark Rothko, Willem de Kooning, and Jackson Pollock. This lavishly illustrated book brings together De Niro's paintings, prints, and drawings as well as a never-before-published selection of his writings and poetry. Featuring essays by noted scholars and an illustrated biography including many unpublished photographs and ephemera, this seminal volume explores the depth and breadth of De Niro's oeuvre.

Featured image: Robert De Niro, Sr. – Self Portrait, 1960. Oil on paper, 22 1/4 x 30 1/4 inches. All images courtesy of DC Moore Gallery.